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ABSTRACT

This ongoing study is designed to examine the quality of early childhood education in England and Wales, identifying key aspects of professional ability crucial to the quality of children's learning. It also seeks to generate criteria for promoting the development of these aspects of professional ability and to develop consequent criteria for improving professional practice in early years education. Activities undertaken during the first year of this project include: (1) development of a survey questionnaire to examine the provision of early childhood education; (2) use of this questionnaire to assess early years education in England and Wales; (3) interviews of administrators of early childhood programs; and (4) case studies of several programs in the London area. Preliminary results of the survey, interviews, and case studies include the following findings: (1) less than 20% of practitioners for children under 8 years held a bachelor's degree in education; (2) only a quarter were initially trained for working specifically with 3- to 8-year-olds; (3) the quality of staff, effective partnerships with parents, and effective environment for learning were cited as the most significant factors supporting development of an age-appropriate curriculum; and (4) knowledge of child development was cited as the most influential factor in professional development of practitioners who work with children under 8 years. (Six appendixes include copies of the pilot and evaluation questionnaires, a summary of feedback from evaluation questionnaires, the final survey questionnaire, and standard guidelines for structured interviews.) (MDM).

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ED 373 870

Early Childhood Education Research Project

INTERIM REPORT

March 1994

Principles into Practice: Improving the Quality of Children's Early Learning (Year One: June 1993 to May 1994)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The research reported below was undertaken as a contribution to the extensive programme of surveys and studies which is currently being mounted world-wide into the principles and the practice of early education.

Research already well established, such as that of the High Scope project in the USA, has underlined the importance of a sound start for children, in relation not only to their subsequent educational progress but also to their development as responsible citizens. And the significance of these findings has been recognised in current proposals and recommendations, most notably perhaps those of the Report of the Commission on Education and of the Report of the Royal Society of Arts, for enhanced provision in this sector.

The findings and these subsequent recommendations, however, have stressed that it is not merely the provision of early education which is important; it is the **quality** of that provision which is crucial. And so, the central task which this research project has addressed is to investigate the related questions of what is the quality of current provision in England and Wales and what is regarded as constituting high quality provision for the early years.

1.1 THE MAIN AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The main aims of the research are:

- ***to identify key aspects of professional ability which are crucial to the quality of children's learning***
- ***to generate criteria for promoting the development of these aspects of professional ability***
- ***to generate consequent criteria for improving professional practice in the early years***

1.2 ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN IN YEAR ONE

In the first year of the study, the major activity has been an extensive survey of existing provision for early years (0-8) education in England and Wales.

While recognizing the important differences in the legal requirements for provision for children from 0-5 and those from (rising) 5-8, the survey has included all forms of provision for children from 0-8 in group settings, whether these are state-maintained, independent or voluntary.

In surveying this range of provision, the survey has sought to obtain information concerning both the nature and the quality of provision, particularly by exploring such major determinants of quality as the settings in which provision is made, the level of resourcing and the qualifications of those professionals and others who are working with young children.

The survey has also had a qualitative dimension, however, since it has set out not only to obtain quantitative data concerning what the current provision is, but also to elicit the views of those directly involved in education in the early years concerning what might constitute quality of provision. This has been done in the hope that some kind of consensus view might emerge of a kind which might be strong enough to transcend any charge of subjectivism in relation to an issue where individual judgment must inevitably play a major part. The identification of aspects of quality regarded as crucial by a significant proportion of professionals must go some way towards offsetting this kind of subjectivity.

This qualitative dimension has been reinforced by a series of structured interviews conducted by members of the research team with the professionals in charge of a number of group settings for early childhood provision in the London area. These structured interviews have again been designed to elicit judgments concerning the essential elements of high quality provision.

Finally, a series of case studies have been undertaken in several group settings in the London area. These have involved members of the team, and several other colleagues, working closely with practitioners and jointly evaluating their practices, their achievements and their difficulties. This action research dimension of the study must now begin to move towards centre-stage, since it is through this activity that we hope to discover strategies for translating the principles derived from our investigations of quality into the realities of professional practice, in order to raise the quality of that practice.

2 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: A BRIEF SUMMARY

2.1 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ABOUT THE PRACTITIONERS THEMSELVES

- Less than a fifth of all practitioners who are working with children under eight years of age in group settings have a first degree. Just over a tenth have no qualifications at all.

- Over two-fifths of teachers who are heads of institutions that cater for young children hold a Certificate of Education and a quarter of these qualified before 1960 with a two year Certificate.

- Over half of practitioners who are working with under-8s were trained as qualified teachers.

- However, only a quarter of these qualified teachers working with under-8s were initially trained for the 3-8 age phase, of which only a third were initially trained to work with 3-5 year olds.

- Nearly two-thirds of teachers working in the early years, therefore, have had no specific initial training for working with children under five years of age.

- Regardless of the age related experience of their initial training, only a sixth of teachers working in the early years have engaged in further study related to early childhood education.

- The majority of heads of institutions, whether they are playgroup leaders or run private nurseries or are working as headteachers, do not upgrade their qualifications once they have acquired the minimum professional qualification for the job.

2.2 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ABOUT THE VIEWS OF HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS CONCERNING QUALITY OF PROVISION

- The majority of heads of every type of group setting, whether located in the voluntary or independent or state-maintained sector ranked *"Knowledge of Child Development"* as the single most influential factor in the professional development of practitioners who work with the under-8s.

- *"Knowledge of School Subjects"* was placed relatively low in the ranking of factors that are of significance to the professional development of practitioners, even by the heads of schools for statutory age children e.g. state-maintained primary and infant schools, and preparatory schools in the private sector.

- *"Ability to Assess Individual Children"*, *"Organisational Skills"* and *"Partnership with Parents"* were ranked as highly significant in the professional development of practitioners by heads. In-service training of all kinds, by contrast, was ranked low.

- *"Inadequate Levels of Staffing"* was considered to be the most constraining factor on the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children by the majority of heads in all types of provision except state-maintained nursery schools. Headteachers of nursery schools cited *"Staff not Trained for Early Years Specialism"* as the most constraining factor.

- *"The Qualities of Staff"*, *"Effective Partnership with Parents"* and *"The Provision of an Effective Environment for Learning"* were cited as the most significant factors in supporting the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children. *"A High Ratio of Staff to Children"* was also seen as very significant by playgroup leaders and by heads of nurseries in the independent sector.

2.3 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM PRACTITIONERS' DESCRIPTIONS OF AN APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

- Early analysis of the description of a quality curriculum reveals a remarkable consensus among practitioners.

- Practitioners advocate a broad curriculum for young children which draws upon real life experiences.

- Practitioners emphasize the importance of the social curriculum and the personal ethos of early education.

- Most practitioners claimed that a high quality curriculum requires high quality and professionally trained practitioners.

- The majority of practitioners express serious concern about the negative effects of a narrow and subject-based curriculum on children's early learning.

2.4 RELATED ISSUES

- Difficulties were encountered in identifying the type of provision to be surveyed. Sometimes this was because a range of different names were used in different geographical regions to describe the same category e.g. Local Authority Day Nurseries had twelve alternative names. Sometimes the provisions had been incorrectly categorised by the local authorities e.g. playgroups were often described as private nurseries.

- Similar difficulties were identified in naming professionals who work with under-5s, e.g. practitioners were often called teachers although they did not have QT status.

- There was a high level of refusals in the survey. Reasons given were usually that the head was overworked or too busy. This level of refusal, however, did not significantly affect the validity of the survey fundings.

- A significant number of playgroups and private nurseries could not be traced by the Post Office although up to date lists were used for the sample.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There have been three main dimensions of the research:

- a questionnaire survey
- structured interviews
- action research case studies.

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

The questionnaire survey constituted the main part of the research in year one. In this section, the objectives, procedures and methodology used in the survey will be outlined.

3.1.1 Objectives

The main objectives of the questionnaire survey were:

- to elicit information on the nature and qualifications of practitioners working with children under-8

- to identify key factors or criteria that support the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children

- to identify key factors or criteria that constrain the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children

- to identify key factors that are influential in the professional development of practitioners working with young children

- to obtain the views of practitioners concerning what constitutes a quality curriculum for young children

- to obtain practitioners' suggestions for improvements in the current educational provision for under-8s

- to obtain practitioners' suggestions for improvements in professional training and development for practitioners who work with young children

3.1.2 Survey Design & Methodology

Our targeted respondents were from a cross-section of institutions/groups and ranged from headteachers in schools to leaders of playgroups. We needed a questionnaire, therefore, which while being appropriately wide-ranging, would not create any major difficulties for the respondents. To ensure this, it was decided to pilot-test the questionnaire and invite evaluation of it before the main survey was undertaken.

The questionnaire survey, therefore, consisted of two phases:

- Pilot Exercise
- Main Survey

3.1.3 Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot exercise was firstly to determine areas in the questionnaire which might need changes or attention in order to ensure that subjects in the main study would experience no difficulties in completing it. Secondly the exercise would enable us to carry out a preliminary analysis to see whether the wording and format of the questions would present any difficulties when the main data were analyzed.

3.1.3.1 *Methodology*

A questionnaire and an evaluation form were sent to each of the selected participants. Participants were requested to complete both the questionnaire and evaluation form. Feedback obtained from the evaluation forms was carefully analyzed and used in the final questionnaire design for the main survey.

3.1.3.2 *Selection of Participants*

The participants of the pilot exercise were selected carefully to ensure that we would obtain a cross section of opinions and comments from practitioners working in all forms of under-8 provision. At least one participant from each type of provision was selected.

3.1.3.3 *Design of Pilot Questionnaire*

The main structure of the pilot questionnaire was designed to elicit effectively all information as set out in the main objectives of the survey (see section 3.1.1).

It was structured into three main sections (Appendix A):

I Information related to the institution
II Number and qualifications of staff
III Planning for early learning

3.1.3.4 *Design of Evaluation Questionnaire*

The objective of the evaluation questionnaire was to identify any potential problems that might be encountered by the respondent, and to find out if any changes or alterations to the questionnaire are required.

The following information was to be elicited from the evaluation questionnaire (Appendix B):

* Time taken by the respondent to complete the questionnaire
* Comment on whether the instructions on the questionnaire are clear and easy to follow
* Comment on the appearance and general layout of the questionnaire
* Unclear or ambiguous questions
* Difficulties in answering any of the questions
* Objections to answering any of the questions
* Omission of any major topic or question
* Any further comments on the questionnaire

3.1.3.5 *Feedback from Pilot Study*

Seventeen sets of pilot questionnaires and evaluation forms were sent out to the selected participants in July 1993. Ten evaluation forms were returned and carefully analyzed to incorporate any changes and suggestions made into the main survey questionnaire. A summary of feedback, including comments and suggestions, may be found in Appendix C.

3.1.4 Main Survey

The main distribution of the questionnaire survey was scheduled to take place in late September 1993 after the school term had begun.

3.1.4.1 *Selection of Participants*

The subjects of our main survey were selected from two main areas:

(i) All the Local Authorities in London
(ii) Selected Counties and Cities in England & Wales

The selected geographical locations for the questionnaire survey are shown below:

London Boroughs

Barking & Dagenham
Barnet
Bexley
Brent
Bromley
Camden
City of London
Croydon
Ealing
Enfield
Greenwich
Hackney
Hammersmith & Fulham
Haringey
Harrow
Havering
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Islington
Kensington & Chelsea
Kingston-Upon-Thames
Lambeth
Lewisham
Merton
Newham
Redbridge
Richmond
Southwark
Sutton
Tower Hamlets
Waltham Forest
Wandsworth
Westminster

Selected Counties and Cities in England & Wales

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Cambridgeshire
Devon
Gwynedd
Hampshire
Humberside
Isle of Man
Isle of Wight
Kent
Kirklees
Liverpool
Manchester
Norfolk
North Tyneside
North Yorkshire
Nottinghamshire
South Glamorgan
Wolverhampton

3.1.4.2 *Selection of Types of Under-8 Provision*

The following shows the types of Under-8 provision involved in the questionnaire survey

State-Maintained Provision

Nursery Schools
Infant and First Schools
Primary Schools
Special Schools and Units
Local Authority Day Nurseries

Non-Maintained Provision

Independent Preparatory Schools
Independent Nursery Schools
Private and Workplace Nurseries
Playgroups

3.1.4.3 *Identification of Institutions*

Information for all types of under-8 provision in our selected areas was requested and obtained from their respective Local Education Authority. Each type of provision was separated into the categories listed above.

Difficulties were encountered during the identification of Local Authority Day Nurseries. It was found that different names are used to represent these Local Authority Day Nurseries. The following is a list of the names used:

Day Nursery
Children's Centre
Young Children's Centre
Family Centre
Under 5s Centre
Under 8s Centre
Day Centre
Nursery Centre
Under 5s Resource Centre
Under 5s Education Centre (UFEC)
Early Years Centre
Childcare Centre

In addition, difficulties were experienced in the gathering of information about non-educational forms of under-8 provision, as some authorities would not release the names and addresses of these establishments.

3.1.4.4 *Determination of Sample Size*

The sample size for the questionnaire survey was determined according to the total population for each type of under-8 provision and the funding available. The latter was crucial in determining the survey sample size.

The methodology used in selecting the survey sample is known as two-stage cluster sampling with unequal cluster sizes (a simple random sample of education authorities, and a simple random sample of under-8 provision under each of the selected authorities). A justification of the methodology used in determining the required sample size for the survey is given in Appendix D.

A total random sample size of 2420 educational and non-educational establishments representing all forms of under-8 provision was chosen for the main survey. This included all the under-8 provision in the London Boroughs of Bromley and Lewisham which it was decided should be surveyed in full.

3.1.4.5 *Main Survey Questionnaire*

The pilot questionnaire was slightly revised to form the main survey questionnaire which was structured into three main sections to elicit the required information:

Part I : Information Related to the Institution
Information to be elicited included:

- *the type of institution/group;*
- *the status of the institution/group;*
- *whether the institution shares accommodation with other institution(s)/group(s);*
- *the surrounding environment of the institution;*
- *the children's access to outdoor play space;*
- *the number of full-time and part-time children in each early years age group;*
- *the gender of the children in each age group; and*
- *the number of children with English as a second language in each age group.*

Part II : Number & Qualifications of Staff
Information to be elicited included:

- *the qualification(s) of the respondent;*
- *the number of full-time and part-time staff who work with children under-8;*
- *the qualifications and roles of other staff members who work closely with children under-8;*
- *the number of staff who have more than one qualification;*
- *the number of staff who have re-trained to work with children under-8 in the early years age range;*
- *the age ranges for which qualified teachers were initially trained; and*

- the number of staff who are qualified teachers and have engaged in further study related to early childhood.

Part III : The Quality of Early Learning

Information to be elicited included:

- factors that support the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children;
- factors that constrain the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children;
- factors that are influential in the professional development of practitioners working with children under eight;
- the respondent's description of a quality curriculum for young children;
- the respondent's suggestions for improvements in the current educational provision for under-8s; and
- the respondent's suggestions for improvements in professional training and development for practitioners who work with young children.

The final version of the questionnaire sent to all selected participants is given in Appendix E.

3.2 STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: PILOT PHASE

This dimension of the research is designed to explore in depth, and by a different research technique, the issues of quality which are a major concern of the study, and to complement the evidence derived from those questions on the survey questionnaire which are directed at eliciting comments on these issues.

The level of funding for the project in its first year was not such as to make it possible to mount this form of research on the scale originally envisaged. In particular, because of the need to maintain a level of sampling for the main survey by questionnaire which would ensure validity of the data, it was not possible to appoint the research assistant needed to support this work on the scale planned.

However, some work has been undertaken in a pilot form, and this has involved structured interviews conducted by the members of the team with the heads of eleven centres in the London area. These interviews, which are audiotaped, are all conducted in accordance with agreed standard guidelines, which have been framed to complement relevant questions on the survey questionnaire (Appendix F).

The texts of these interviews have been transcribed. And responses to question 10 of the structured interviews, "How would you describe a quality curriculum for young children?", are being analyzed as narratives and compared with the written responses to question 19 of the survey questionnaire which is identically worded.

This pilot exercise is also enabling us to compare modes of analysis to determine the most appropriate and productive form for this kind of exploration.

3.3 ACTION RESEARCH CASE STUDIES: PILOT PHASE

Action research is being undertaken with practitioners in eleven group settings in the London area as follows:

3 State-Maintained Primary Schools (mixed 3-11 year olds)
2 State-Maintained Infant Schools (mixed 3-7 year olds)
1 Independent Preparatory School (single sex 6-12 year old boys, with a mixed nursery, 3-6 year olds)
2 State-Maintained Nursery Schools (mixed 3-5 year olds)
2 State-Maintained Combined Centres for Under-5s (mixed 1-5 year olds)
1 Independent Workplace Nursery (mixed 9 months - 4 year olds)

These pilot studies begin by examining the claim that if we are to develop the quality of the curriculum for young children then we must have reflective practitioners. The project team is seeking to test this assumption by undertaking action research with practitioners and evaluating the effect that reflection on practice has on both the quality and the development of that practice and provision.

All the practitioners involved in the pilot studies have chosen their own curriculum issue to investigate and reflect upon (e.g. early representation and cognitive development, managing staff contact with children). Although each issue is different, they have all been selected as examples that illustrate the important link between principles and practice. In short, each practitioner is researching firstly into her/his effectiveness in putting the principles into practice.

With the help of a research team member - "a critical friend", to use the action research terminology - the practitioners are, secondly, evaluating the effect of the action research process on the quality of the experiences that are provided for their children.

The practitioners are in control of the investigation and the action research process. The research team member is available to help in the processes of:

- gathering evidence
- reflecting on practice
- linking thought to action
- evaluating evidence
- reporting the action research

It must be the practitioner, however, who defines the problem and controls the action research process.

In addition the researchers are evaluating the action research process itself as an effective means of developing the quality of a curriculum. For an important thesis to be tested is whether the quality of provision can be raised by promoting a capability for reflective self-evaluation in practitioners.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

In total 548 questionnaires were returned by the end of December 1993, representing just under a quarter of the total number of questionnaires sent out initially. Figure 1 gives a breakdown of the total number of questionnaires returned from each of the selected forms of under-8 provision.

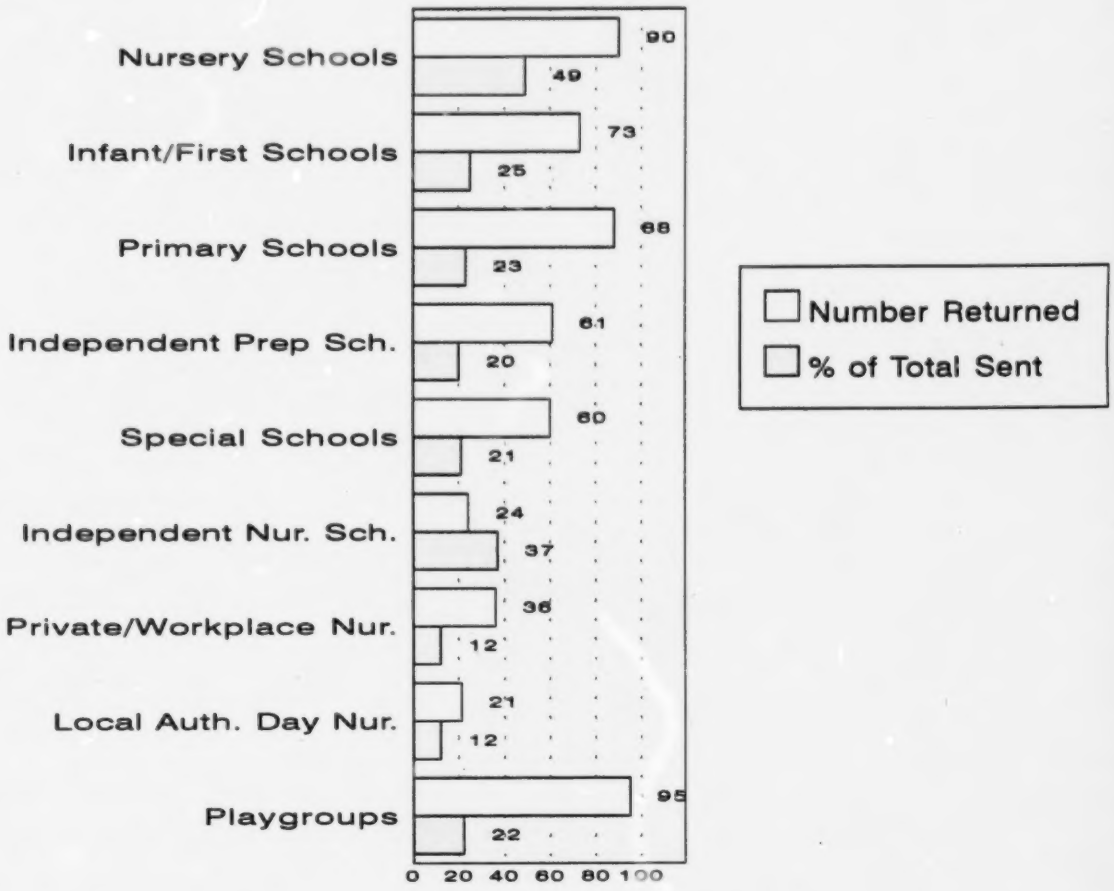

Figure 1 **Total Number of Questionnaires Returned from the Main Survey**
(by the end of December 1993)

All returned questionnaires were sorted into their respective categories of under-8 provision for the London Boroughs and the Counties. Special codings were assigned to all returned questionnaires for easy identification and reference. Summary sheets were designed for each question to record the information elicited from the completed questionnaires. These were then transferred onto the computer for statistical analysis.

4.1.1 Survey Analysis

Statistical analysis is being performed on all quantitative data elicited from each of the three main parts of the questionnaire as detailed below:

Part I: Information Related to the Institution

The financial status of the institution
Whether the institution has private or shared accommodation
The surrounding environment of the institution
The children's access to outdoor play space
The style of children's access to outdoor play space
Number of full-time and part-time children in each age group
Number of boys and girls in each age group
Number of children with ESL in each age group
Staff to child ratio for each form of under-8 provision
Staff to child ratio for state-maintained provision
Staff to child ratio for non-maintained provision
Staff to child ratio for all forms of provision in London

Part II: Number and Qualifications of Staff

The qualifications of heads of institution and other practitioners working closely with children under 8.

The qualifications of heads and staff will be analyzed in relation to the following variables:

- staff in all forms of provision
- staff in maintained provision
- staff in non-maintained provision
- staff in London Boroughs
- number, type and level of qualification(s) held
- staff with specific early years qualifications
- engagement in further study after initial qualification
- staff in different forms of provision

Part III: The Quality of Early Learning

Factors considered to be most significant in supporting the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children by heads of institutions in the following categories:

- maintained provision
- non-maintained provision
- London Boroughs
- different forms of provision

Factors considered to be most significant in constraining the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children by heads of institutions in the same categories.

Factors considered to be influential in the professional development of practitioners by heads of institutions in the same categories.

5 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Analysis is still being performed on the survey questionnaire. The following are the major findings so far from the questionnaire survey.

5.1 QUALIFICATIONS HELD BY HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS (Figure 2)

- 42.1 percent of Heads of Institutions qualified as teachers through a Certificate of Education (Two-Year: 10.4 percent; Three-Year: 31.7 percent).

- 19.2 percent qualified initially through a first degree in Education (BA(Ed.)/B.Ed./ B.Add).

- 9 percent qualified by way of a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

- 18.3 percent qualified by way of NNEB/City and Guilds courses.

- Only 37.4 percent have first degrees.

- 12.5 percent have higher degree qualifications (Masters' degrees: 11.1 percent; Research degrees/Doctorates: 1.4 percent).

- 28.3 percent have playgroup qualifications accredited by PPA.

- 31.8 percent have other qualifications (e.g. Diploma in Special Needs, Diploma in Education, Certificate in Special Education etc.).

- 58 percent have more than one qualification.

5.2 QUALIFICATIONS HELD BY UNDER-8 PRACTITIONERS (Figure 3)

- Only 19.4 percent of all practitioners has a first degree, of which 71.29 percent has a first degree in Education.

- A very low proportion of practitioners has a higher degree (0.96 percent), of which 87.5 percent has a Masters' degree.

- 20.86 percent of all under-8 practitioners were qualified by way of NNEB/City and Guilds course.

- 17.94 percent of practitioners qualified as teachers through a Certificate of Education, of which 12.1 percent were qualified before 1960 with a two-year Certificate of Education.

- 16.46 percent of practitioners have playgroup qualifications accredited by PPA.

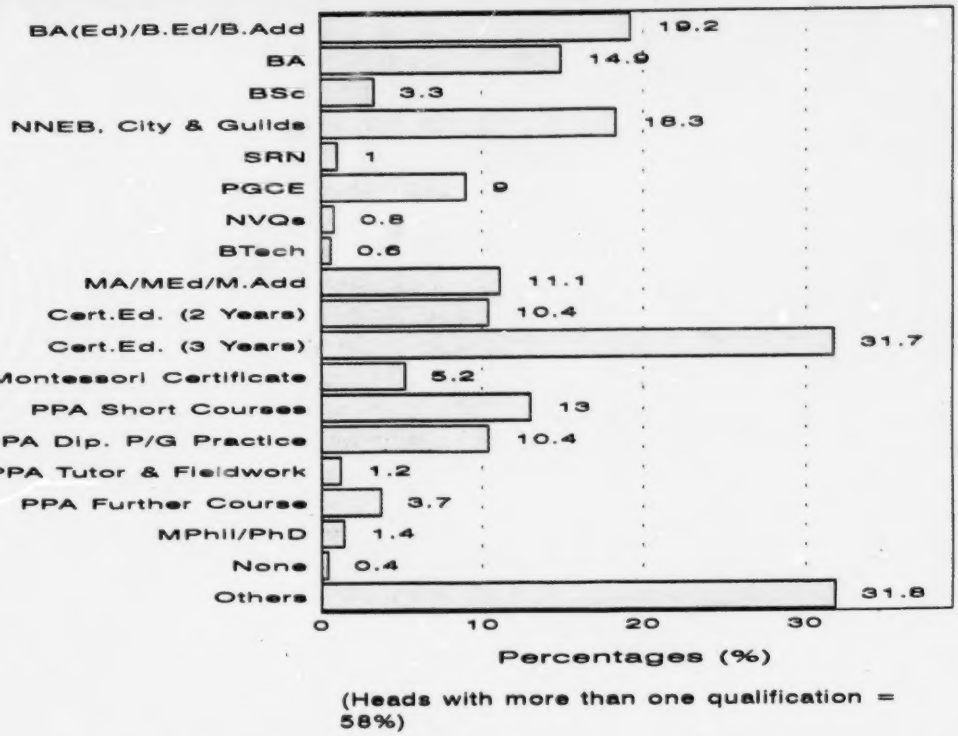

Figure 2 **Qualifications Held by Heads of Institutions**

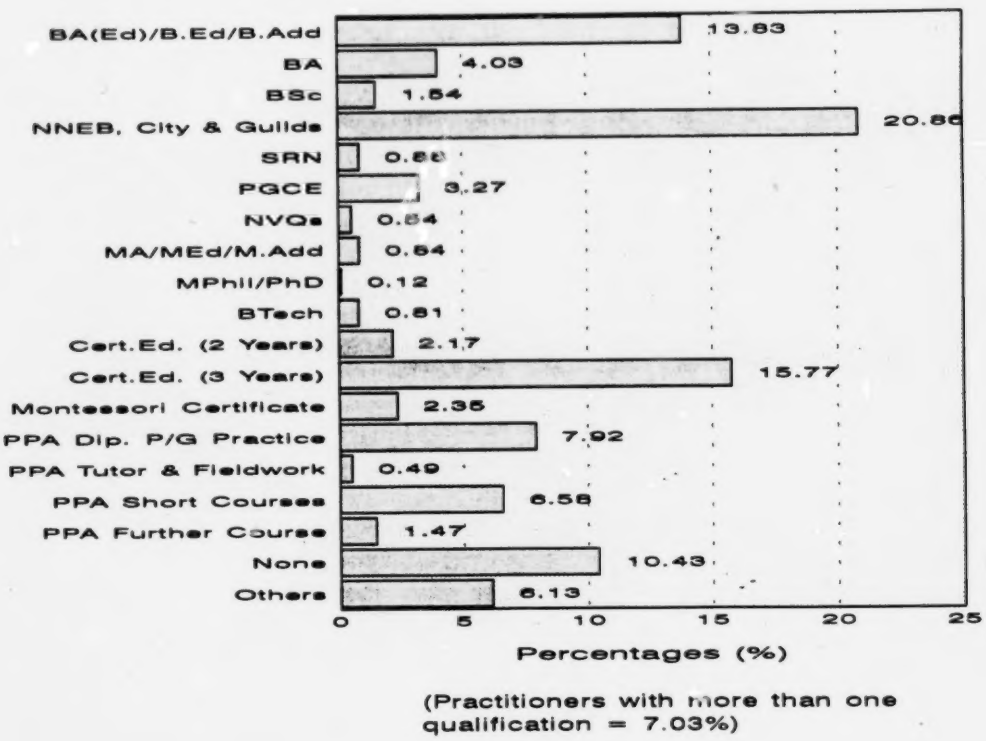

Figure 3 **Qualifications Held by Practitioners Working with Children Under-8**

- 10.43 percent of practitioners have no qualification at all.

- 7.03 percent of practitioners have more than one qualification.

- Only 7.88 percent of practitioners were re-trained to work with under-8s, of which the majority (54.95 percent) were re-trained in the 0-5 years age range (Figure 4).

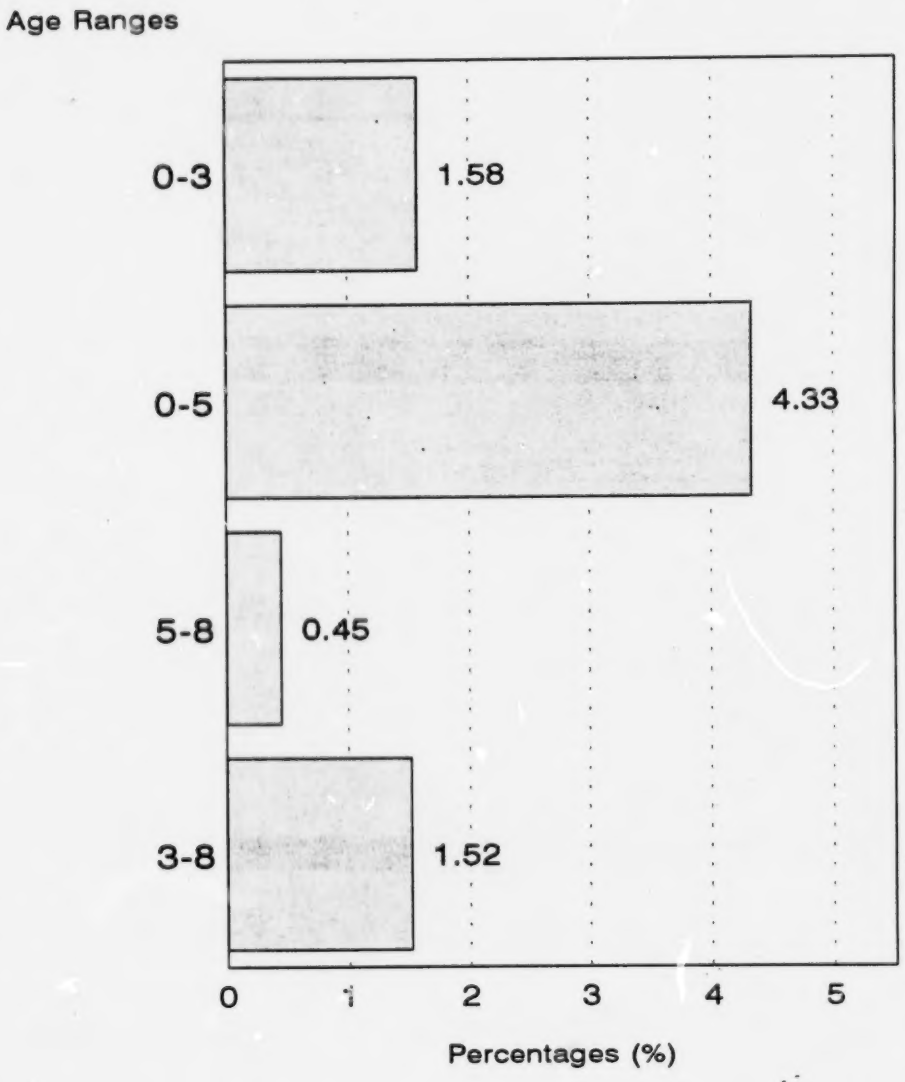

Figure 4 **Proportion of Practitioners Re-trained to Work with Children Under-8 According to Specific Age Ranges**

5.3 AGE RANGES FOR WHICH QUALIFIED TEACHERS WORKING WITH UNDER-8s WERE INITIALLY TRAINED (Figure 5)

- Only a quarter (25 percent) of qualified teachers were initially trained specifically for the 3-8 age phase, of which only 32.64 percent were initially trained for the 3-5 age phase.

- A further 9.18 percent of qualified teachers had a form of initial training which included some work with under-5s.

- 45.92 percent of qualified teachers were trained initially through a Certificate of Education, of which just over a fifth (20.73 percent) were initially trained in the 3-8 age phase (Figure 6).

- The majority (65.8 percent) of qualified teachers working in the early years, therefore, have had no specific initial training for working with under-5s.

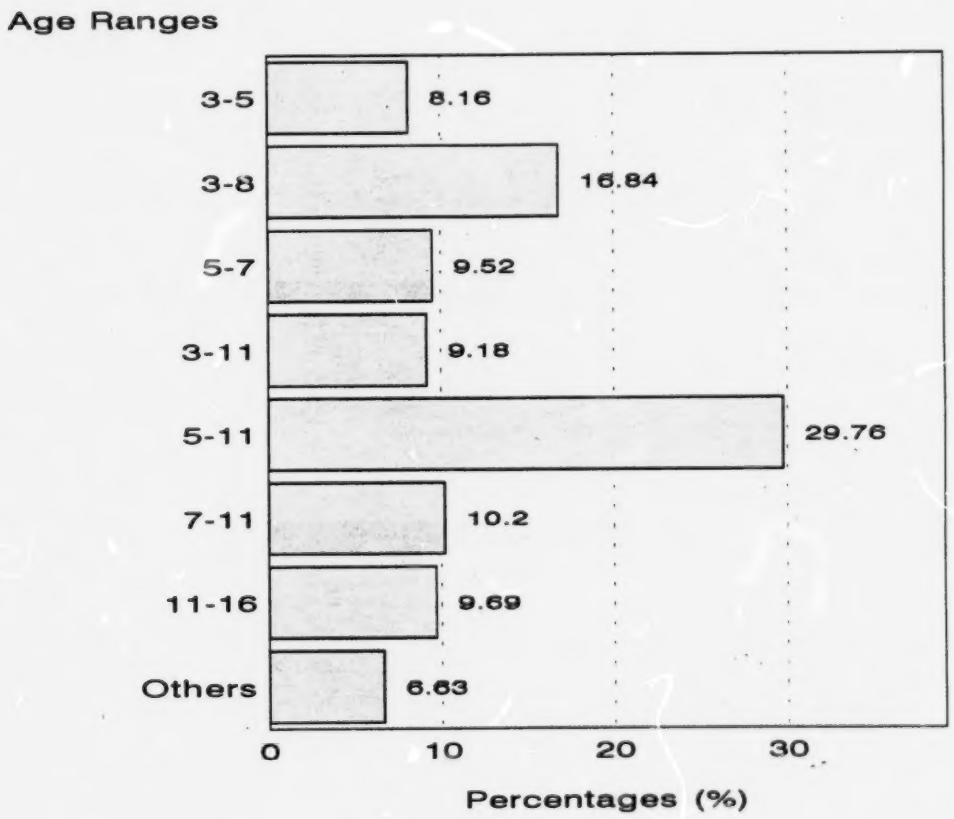

Figure 5 **Age Ranges for which Qualified Teachers Working with Under-8s were Initially Trained**

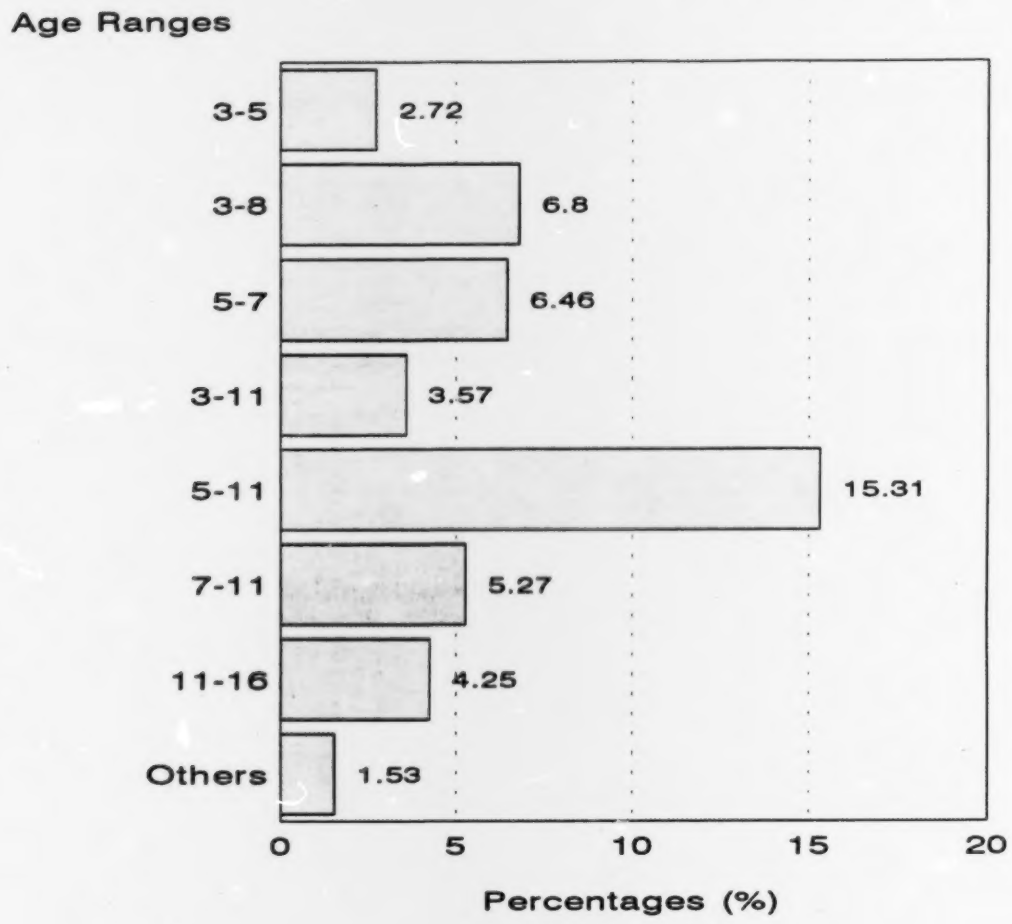

Figure 6 **Age Ranges for which Qualified Teachers were Initially Trained through a Certificate of Education**

5.4 FURTHER STUDY UNDERTAKEN BY QUALIFIED TEACHERS (Figure 7)

- Only 15.48 percent of qualified teachers working in the early years have engaged in further study related to Early Childhood Education.

- 94.51 percent of all teachers who have engaged in further study were employed in London.

- A very small proportion (2.72 percent) of qualified teachers have undertaken further study for higher degrees.
- 93.75 percent of these have undertaken further study for a Masters' degree.

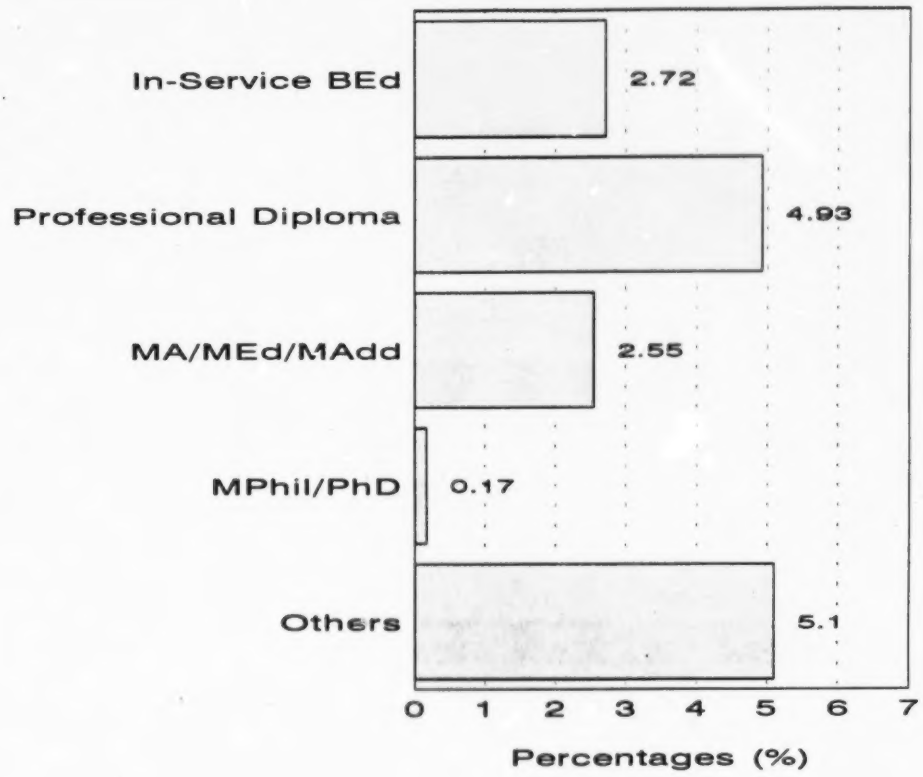

Figure 7 **Proportion of Qualified Teachers who have Engaged in Further Study Related to Early Childhood Education**

5.5 FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (Figures 8,9,10,11)

- *"The Qualities of Staff"*, *"Effective Partnership with Parents"* and *"The Provision of an Effective Environment for Learning"* were cited as the most significant factors in supporting the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children by 74 percent, 72 percent and 63 percent of heads of institutions respectively.

- Whereas factors like the *"Length of Experience of Staff"* (7 percent), *"Evaluating Provision"* (11 percent), *"An Adequate Physical Environment for Learning"* (14 percent) and *"A Supportive Social Environment"* (13 percent) were considered as not so significant in supporting the development of an appropriate curriculum.

- *"A High Ratio of Staff to Children"* was also seen as very significant by playgroup leaders (57 percent) and by heads of nurseries in the independent sector - heads of independent nursery schools (63 percent) and heads of private and workplace nurseries (65 percent) (Figures 9,10,11).

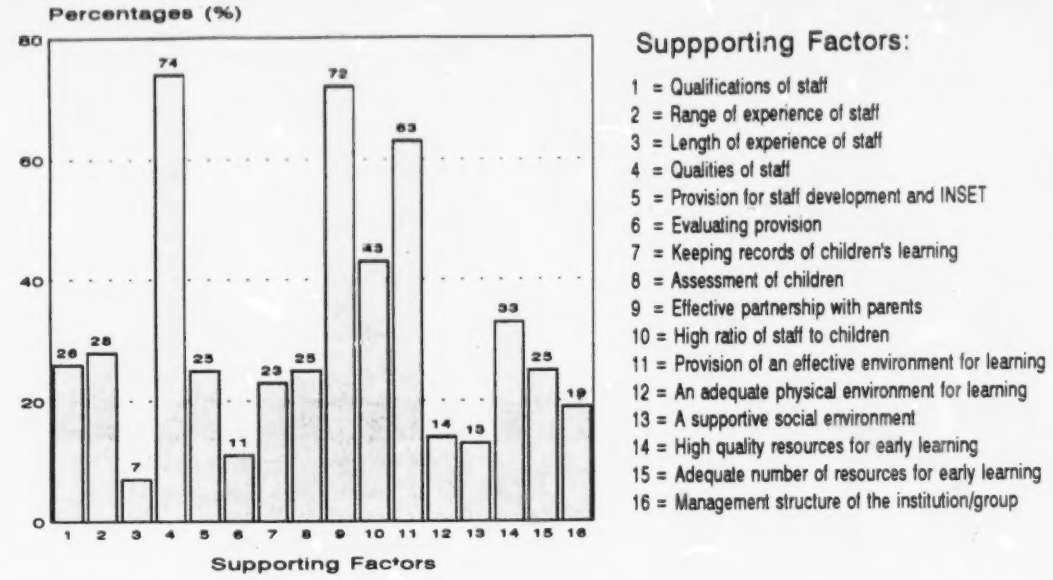

Figure 8 **Factors Considered by Heads of Institutions to be Most Significant in Supporting the Development of an Appropriate Curriculum for Young Children**

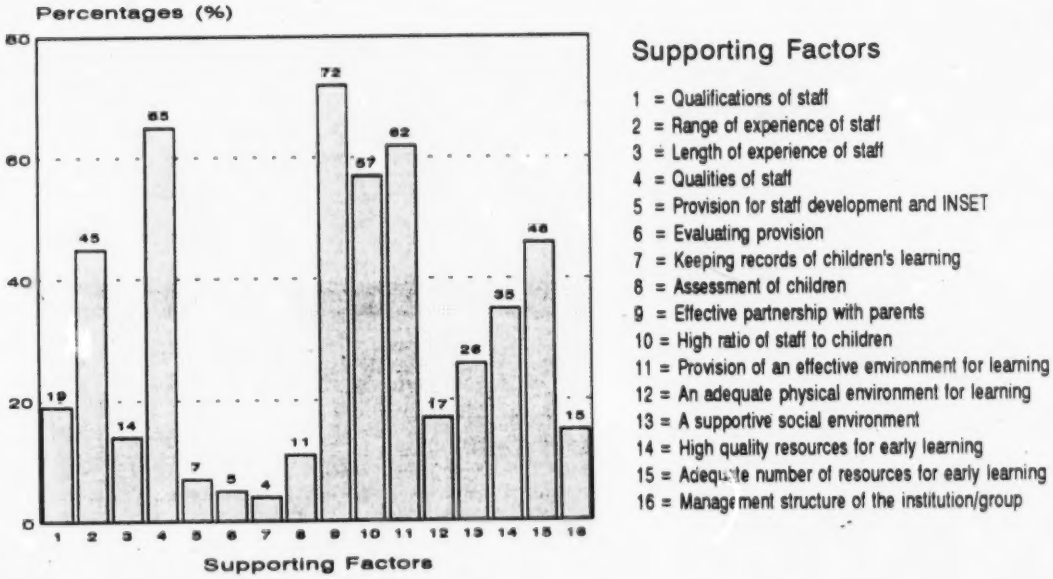

Figure 9 **Factors Considered by Leaders of Playgroups to be Most Significant in Supporting the Development of an Appropriate Curriculum for Young Children**

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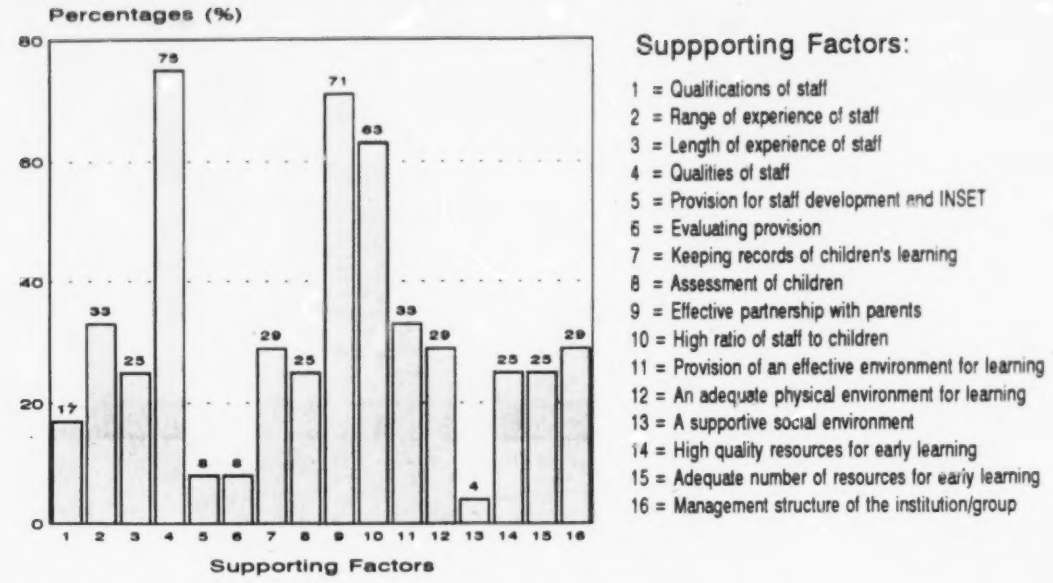

Figure 10 **Factors Considered by Heads of Independent Nursery Schools to be Most Significant in Supporting the Development of an Appropriate Curriculum for Young Children**

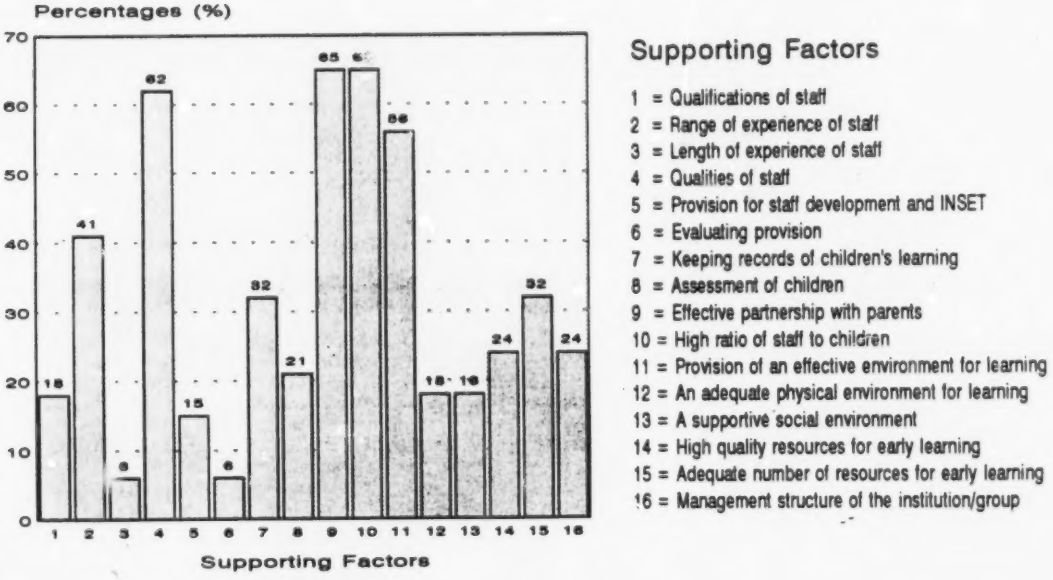

Figure 11 **Factors Considered by Heads of Private and Workplace Nurseries to be Most Significant in Supporting the Development of an Appropriate Curriculum for Young Children**

5.6 FACTORS THAT CONSTRAIN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (Figures 12 and 13)

- *"Inadequate Levels of Staffing"* was considered to be the most constraining factor on the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children by the majority of heads (63 percent) in all types of provision except state-maintained nursery schools.

- The majority (73 percent) of headteachers of nursery schools cited *"Staff not Trained for Early Years Specialism"* as the most constraining factor (Figure 13).

- *"Limited Opportunities for Learning Out of Doors"* was considered to be the least constraining factor on the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children by heads of institutions (13 percent).

- *"Insufficient Budget for Resources"* (60 percent) and *"Poor Management of the Institution"* (56 percent) were also considered as very significant factors in constraining the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children.

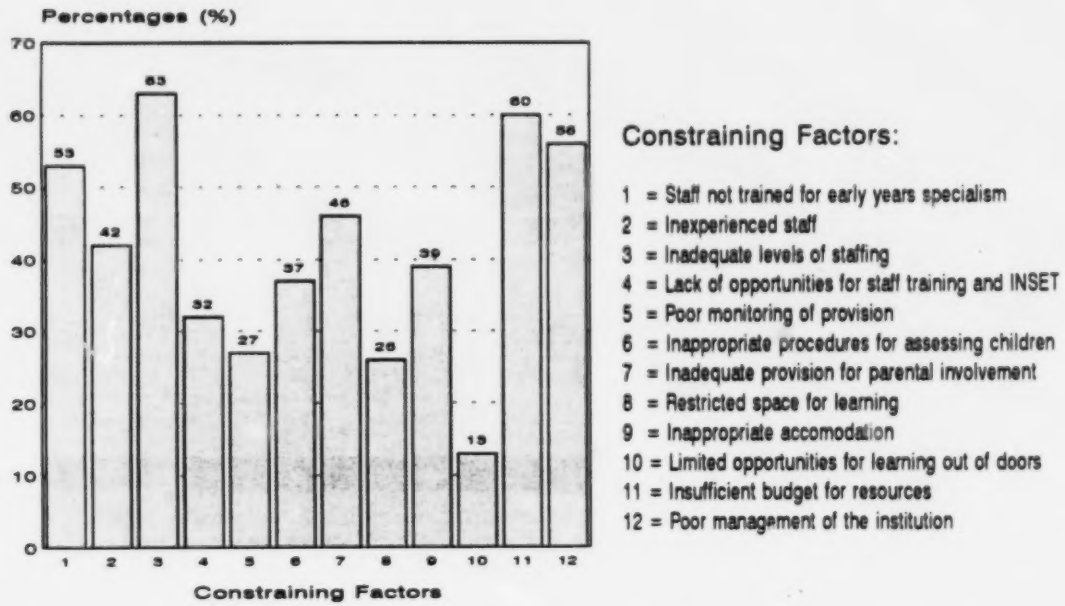

Figure 12 Factors Considered by Heads of Institutions to be Most Significant in Constraining the Development of an Appropriate Curriculum for Young Children

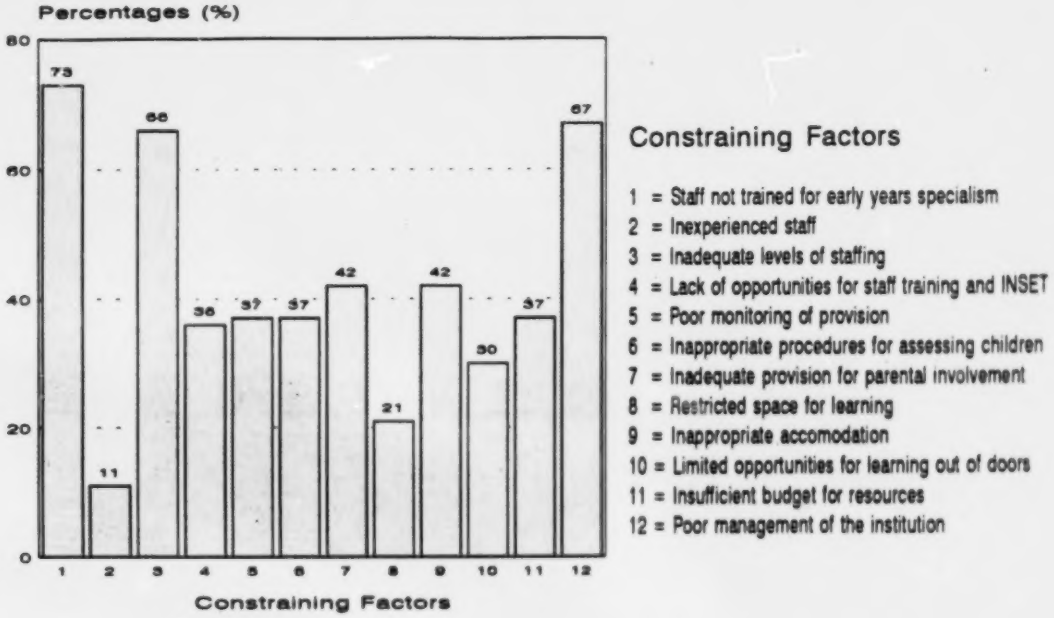

Figure 13 **Factors Considered by Heads of Nursery Schools to be Most Significant in Constraining the Development of an Appropriate Curriculum for Young Children**

5.7 FACTORS THAT ARE INFLUENTIAL IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTITIONERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN UNDER-8 (Figures 14,15,16,17)

- The majority of heads of every type of group setting, whether located in the voluntary or independent or state-maintained sector ranked *"Knowledge of Child Development"* as the single most influential factor in the professional development of practitioners who work with the under-8s.

- *"Knowledge of School Subjects"* was considered to be relatively low in the ranking of factors that are of significance to the professional development of practitioners, even by the heads of schools for statutory age children, e.g. state-maintained primary and infant schools, and preparatory schools in the private sector (Figures 15,16,17).

- *"Ability to Assess Individual Children"*, *"Organisational Skills"* and *"Partnership with Parents"* were ranked as highly significant in the professional development of practitioners by heads.

- In-service training of all kinds, by contrast, was ranked low and considered to be less significant in the professional development of practitioners by heads of institutions.

Factors	Ranking Point
Knowledge of Child Development	1.82
Ability to Assess individual Child	3.34
Organisational Skills	3.42
Partnership with Parents	4.24
Openness to Change	4.60
Meticulous Planning	5.46
Regular Staff Meetings	5.78
Understanding of Educational Issues	5.89
Knowledge of School Subjects	6.73
Feedback from Staff Appraisal	7.14
School Based In-service Training	7.15
Local Authority Based In-service Training	8.12
Familiarity with Recent Research	8.63
Higher Education Based In-Service Training	9.61
Access to Professional Journals	9.81

Note: Ranking Point 1 = the most influential factor

Figure 14 **Factors Considered to be Influential in the Professional Development of Practitioners by the Heads of Institutions**

Factors	Ranking Point
Knowledge of Child Development	2.29
Organisational Skills	2.78
Ability to Assess Individual Children	3.95
Meticulous Planning	4.06
Partnership with Parents	4.32
Openness to Change	5.60
Understanding of Educational Issues	6.16
Knowledge of School Subjects	6.37
School Based In-Service Training	6.80
Regular Staff Meetings	7.81
Local Authority Based In-Service Training	8.48
Feedback from Staff Appraisal	9.54
Higher Education Based In-Service Training	10.61
Familiarity with Recent Research	10.94
Access to Professional Journals	11.67

Note: Ranking Point 1 = the most influential factor

Figure 15 **Factors Considered to be Influential in the Professional Development of Practitioners by Heads of Primary Schools**

Factors	Ranking Point
Knowledge of Child Development	1.61
Organisational Skills	3.12
Ability to Assess Individual Children	3.63
Partnership with Parents	3.74
Openness to Change	4.65
Meticulous Planning	4.74
Understanding of Educational Issues	4.92
Regular Staff Meetings	5.59
Knowledge of School Subjects	5.74
School Based In-Service Training	6.18
Local Authority Based In-Service Training	7.54
Feedback from Staff Appraisal	7.64
Familiarity with Recent Research	8.44
Higher Education Based In-Service Training	9.22
Access to Professional Journals	9.60

Note: Ranking Point 1 = the most influential factor

Figure 16 **Factors Considered to be Influential in the Professional Development of Practitioners by Heads of Infant/First Schools**

Factors	Ranking Point
Knowledge of Child Development	2.02
Ability to Assess Individual Children	2.75
Organisational Skills	2.84
Meticulous Planning	4.64
Partnership with Parents	5.02
Openness to Change	5.43
Knowledge of School Subjects	6.17
Understanding of Educational Issues	6.46
Feedback from Staff Appraisal	7.41
Regular Staff Meetings	7.44
School Based In-Service Training	8.77
Familiarity with Recent Research	9.49
Access to Professional Journals	10.84
Local Authority Based In-Service Training	11.10
Higher Education Based In-Service Training	11.90

Note: Ranking Point 1 = the most influential factor

Figure 17 **Factors Considered to be Influential in the Professional Development of Practitioners by Heads of Independent Preparatory Schools**

6 DISSEMINATION

The dissemination of the findings of the research will be a major concern in the next stage of the project, when the generation of strategies to support the professional development of practitioners will be a major task. It is planned to hold a series of regional conferences throughout the UK in order to establish a number of centres for the dissemination of findings and the development of staff.

Such dissemination activities must await a complete analysis of the data. In the early stages of the research, however, we have already begun the process of setting up dissemination networks and gaining outlets for the publication and reporting of the research findings.

6.1 DISSEMINATION NETWORKS ALREADY ESTABLISHED

Dissemination networks have been established through the following agencies:

- Goldsmiths' Association for Early Childhood Education (including the GAEC international network)
- headteacher groups in the London Boroughs of Southwark and Sutton
- several local education authorities, including Berkshire, Kent and Norfolk
- the London branch of Soroptimist International

6.2 PUBLICATION & REPORTING

Arrangements are being made for the publication and reporting of findings through the following agencies:

- Times Educational Supplement Research Focus
- Paul Chapman Publishing Limited
- BBC Education
- 'Early Years' (the next issue to be devoted entirely to this research)

7 FURTHER WORK

7.1 ANALYSIS TO BE COMPLETED IN YEAR ONE

A statistical analysis as detailed in section 4.1.1 is being performed and will be completed by the end of year one of the research (June 1994). All findings and results will be reported and presented in a full research report.

7.2 FUTURE WORK & DEVELOPMENT

7.2.1 Further Analysis of the Survey Data

The nature and amount of information which can be elicited from the questionnaire make it possible to perform further detailed statistical analysis. This will be concerned primarily to explore issues such as:

- the financial status of the types of under-8 provision and the sharing of accommodation
- the surrounding environment and the children's access to outdoor play space
- the staff to child ratio and the style of children's access to outdoor play space
- the qualifications of staff and the financial status of the institution
- the qualifications of staff and the geographical location of the institution
- the staff to child ratio and the surrounding environment of the institution
- the choice of supporting/constraining factors in curriculum planning and the financial status of the institution
- the choice of supporting/constraining factors in curriculum planning and the staff to child ratio
- the choice of supporting/constraining factors in curriculum planning and the surrounding environment of the institution
- the choice of supporting/constraining factors in curriculum planning and the geographical location of the institution
- the choice of ranking of influential factors in the professional development of practitioners by heads of institutions and the qualifications of heads of institutions

7.2.2 A Further Survey

A further survey on (a) the choice of factors that support/constrain the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children; and (b) the ranking of factors that are influential in the professional development of practitioners working with children under-8 has been performed on past and present MA students of Goldsmiths' College and will be performed on selected members of the Goldsmiths' Association for Early Childhood (GAEC).

This survey will make possible an analysis and comparison of the responses between the three categories of respondents, (a) random sample of heads of institutions from year one survey, (b) past and present MA students, and (c) selected GAEC members.

7.2.3 Developing Links Between the Quantitative and the Qualitative Dimensions of the Research

A cross analysis between the quantitative data and the qualitative data (Questions 19 and 20 of survey questionnaire) to establish any relationship between:

- the quality of responses and the types of under-8 institutions
- the quality of responses and the qualifications of heads of institutions
- the kinds of response and the types of under-8 institutions
- the kinds of response and the qualifications of heads of institutions

- the contents of the responses and the types of under-8 institutions
- the contents of the responses and the qualifications of heads of institutions
- the ideological flavour of the responses and the types of under-8 institutions
- the ideological flavour of the responses and the qualifications of heads of institutions

7.2.4 Development of Structured Interviews and Action Research Case Studies

The next stage of the research must be characterized by a shift from the quantitative to the qualitative. And this will entail an increase in the attention to be given to both the structured interviews and the action research case studies. In particular, these will need to be increased in both scale and intensity.

For, since the major long-term aim of the research is to contribute to an improvement in the quality of early years educational provision, and to do so by enhancing the levels and quality of performance of early years practitioners, the next major task is to explore strategies by which both of these can be effected. And one important thesis of the research is that a prime strategy for achieving this is the promotion of a capacity for self-evaluation in the practitioners themselves. The discovery of how this can best be approached is the main purpose of the action research dimension of the study.

The second year of the research, therefore, will see an extension of this dimension.

8 CONCLUSIONS

It is becoming increasingly clear that policies for early education are crucial to the future of the nation, both economically and socially. There is thus much attention currently being devoted to those policies. If, as a nation, we are to get them right, we need as full an understanding as can be achieved of what constitutes the right kind of educational provision for young children.

This research is seeking to make its own contribution to the combined tasks of establishing what is a quality curriculum for the early years and how it might be provided for all children.

An Interim Report can only give a flavour of what the research has achieved so far and of what its further potential might be. There is perhaps enough in this Report, however, to confirm that its contribution to the current debate is of some significance.

Geva M. Blenkin
(Director of the Project)
Nora Y.L. Yue
(Research Associate)
Goldsmiths' College
March 1994

Appendix A

Pilot Questionnaire

[For official use only:

Date received: ..... Ref no:.....]

GOLDSMITHS' COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education Research Project

PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE: Improving the Quality of Children's Early Learning

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General Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to gather information and opinions for the Early Childhood Education Research Project. By completing this questionnaire, you and your colleagues are helping to increase our understanding of how we can improve the quality of children's learning in these important early stages. We appreciate your cooperation. Data gathered in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially and presented only in a summary form without the name or affiliation of the respondent.

Name of respondent: .....

Status: .....

Name and address of educational institution or group:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone number: .....

Age range of children catered for: .....

Part I: Information Related to the Institution

1 Of what type is your institution/group? (Please tick as appropriate)

Nursery school	[ ]1	Nursery class	[ ]7
Infant school	[ ]2	Workplace nursery	[ ]8
First school	[ ]3	Independent preparatory school	[ ]9
Primary or JMI (Junior mixed and infants)	[ ]4	Independent nursery school	[ ]10
Local authority day nursery	[ ]5	Playgroup	[ ]11
Private day nursery	[ ]6	Special needs school/unit	[ ]12

Others, please specify: .....

2 Financial status of your educational institution or group: (Please tick as appropriate)

Independent	[ ]1	Voluntary	[ ]2
Local Authority	[ ]3	Funded by Employer	[ ]4

Others, please specify:.....

3 Does your institution share accommodation with other institution(s)/group(s)?

Yes [ ]1 No [ ]2

If Yes, please specify: .....

4 Please give a brief description of the surrounding environment? (Please tick as appropriate)

Inner urban area	[ ]1	Traditional rural area	[ ]3
Suburban area	[ ]2	Commuter rural area	[ ]4

Others [ ]5 Please specify: .....

5 Do the children have access to outdoor play space at your institution/group?

Yes [ ]1 No [ ]2

If Yes, what is the style of access? (Please tick as appropriate)

Continuous	[ ]1
Occasional	[ ]2
Infrequent (eg requires an expedition with adults, supervised playtime etc.)	[ ]3

6 Number and gender of children and number of ESL children in each age group: (Please state the number of children in each category)

Age:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	For official use only: Total
Full-time	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Part-time	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Boys	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Girls	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Children whose first language is not English (ESL)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Part II: Number & Qualifications of Staff

7 What is/are your qualification(s)? (Please tick as appropriate)

BA(Ed)/BEd	[ ]1	MA	[ ]6	PPA Diploma in Playgroup Practice	[ ]12
NNEB	[ ]2	MPhil/PhD	[ ]7		
SRN	[ ]3	Cert.Ed.(2 years)	[ ]8	PPA Fieldwork Diploma	[ ]13
PGCE	[ ]3	Cert.Ed.(3 years)	[ ]9	None	[ ]14
NVQS	[ ]4	Montessori Certificate	[ ]10	Others, please specify:	[ ]15
BTech	[ ]5	PPA Basic Course Certificate: Learning Through Play	[ ]11	.....	

8 Please indicate the number of full-time and part-time staff, both paid and voluntary:

Full-time paid	[ ]1	Part-time paid	[ ]3
Full-time voluntary	[ ]2	Part-time voluntary	[ ]4

9 What are the qualifications of the staff who work closely with children? (Please state numbers for each gender in each category)

	Teachers (1)	Support teachers (2)	Nursery nurses (3)	Nursery workers (4)	Classroom assistants (5)	Others (6)
Q1 BA(Ed) or BEd						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q2 NNEB						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q3 SRN						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f

	Teachers (1)	Support teachers (2)	Nursery nurses (3)	Nursery workers (4)	Classroom assistants (5)	Others (6)
Q4 PGCE						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q5 NVQs						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q6 MA						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q7 MPhil/PhD						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q8 BTech						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q9 Cert.Ed. (2 years)						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q10 Cert.Ed. (3 years)						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q11 Montessori Certificate						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q12 PPA Basic Course Certificate: Learning Through Play						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q13 PPA Diploma in Playgroup Practice						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q14 PPA Tutor Fieldwork Diploma						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q15 None						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q16 Others, Please specify:						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f

10 If you have Qualified Teachers on your staff, which age range were they trained for initially? (Please state numbers for each gender in each category)

	Age Range							
	3-5 (1)	3-8 (2)	5-7 (3)	3-11 (4)	5-11 (5)	7-11 (6)	11-16 (7)	Others (8)
Qualified Teacher Status:								
R1 BA(Ed)/BEd								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
R2 PGCE								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
R3 Cert.Ed								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
R4 Others, please specify:								
.....								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m

11 Have any of your staff re-trained for early years? (Please state numbers for each gender in each category)

	Early Years Age Range		
	3-5 (1)	5-8 (2)	3-8 (3)
S1 BA(Ed)/BEd			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S2 NNEB			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S3 SRN			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S4 PGCE			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S5 NVQs			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S6 MA			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f

	Early Years Age Range		
	3-5 (1)	5-8 (2)	3-8 (3)
S7 MPhil/PhD			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S8 BTech			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S9 Cert.Ed.			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S10 Montessori Certificate			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S11 PPA Basic Course: Learning Through Play			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S12 PPA Diploma in Playgroup Practice			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S13 PPA Tutor Fieldwork Course			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f
S14 Others, please specify:			
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f

Part III: Planning for Early Learning

12 The following list identifies some of the factors that are influential in planning a curriculum for young children. Please tick the five that you consider to be the most influential factors.

Qualifications of staff	[ ]1
Range of experience of staff	[ ]2
Length of experience of staff	[ ]3
Qualities of staff	[ ]4
Provision for staff development and INSET	[ ]5
Evaluating provision	[ ]6
Keeping records of children's learning	[ ]7
Assessment of children	[ ]8
Effective partnership with parents	[ ]9
High ratio of staff to children	[ ]10
Provision of an effective environment for learning	[ ]11
An adequate physical environment for learning	[ ]12
A supportive social environment	[ ]13
High quality resources for early learning	[ ]14
Adequate number of resources for early learning	[ ]15
Management structure of the institution/group	[ ]16

Others, please specify:

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

13 The following list identifies some of the factors that constrain curriculum planning for young children. Please tick the five that you consider to be the most constraining factors.

Staff not trained for early years specialism	[ ]1
Inexperienced staff	[ ]2
Inadequate levels of staffing	[ ]3
Lack of opportunities for staff training and INSET	[ ]4
Poor monitoring of provision	[ ]5
Inappropriate procedures for assessing children	[ ]6
Inadequate provision for parental involvement	[ ]7
Restricted space for learning	[ ]8
Inappropriate accommodation	[ ]9
Limited opportunities for learning out of doors	[ ]10
Insufficient budget for resources	[ ]11
Poor management of the institution	[ ]12

Others, please specify:

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

14 What factors do you think are influential in your professional development? (Please place a "1" against the most influential factor and a "2" against the next most influential factor and so on. For two or more factors which you think are of equal importance, please place the same number against each factor)

Knowledge of child development	[ ]1
Meticulous planning	[ ]2
Organisational skills	[ ]3
Knowledge of school subjects	[ ]4
Ability to assess individual children	[ ]5
Feedback from staff appraisal	[ ]6
Regular staff meetings	[ ]7
Partnership with parents	[ ]8
Openness to change	[ ]9
Understanding of educational issues	[ ]10
Familiarity with recent research	[ ]11
Access to professional journals	[ ]12
School based in-service training	[ ]13
Local Authority based in-service training	[ ]14
Higher Education based in-service training	[ ]15

Others, please specify:

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

15 How would you describe a quality curriculum for young children?
(Please use additional sheets if necessary)

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.

Would you be available for further discussions/interviews? Yes [ ]1 No [ ]2

Please return the questionnaire to:

Dr Nora Y L Yue
Early Childhood Education Research Centre
Faculty of Education
Goldsmiths' College
University of London
New Cross
London SE14 6NW

Appendix B

Evaluation Questionnaire used in Pilot Study

[For official use only:

Date received: ..... Ref no:.....]

PILOT EVALUATION FORM

The purpose of the pilot exercise is firstly to determine areas in the questionnaire which may need changes or attention in order to ensure that subjects in our main study will experience no difficulties in completing it. Secondly the exercise will enable us to carry out a preliminary analysis to see whether the wording and format of the questions will present any difficulties when the main data are analyzed. Any comments or information you give will be a valuable source of feedback to enable us to revise the questionnaire ready for the main distribution.

1 How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire? .....

2 Were the instructions on the questionnaire clear and easy to follow?

Yes [ ]1 No [ ]2

3 What do you think of the appearance and general layout of the questionnaire?

Good	Fairly good	About average	Fairly poor	Poor	Very poor
[ ]1	[ ]2	[ ]3	[ ]4	[ ]5	[ ]6

5 Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous? If so, please state which and why?

Part I - Information Related to the Institution:.....

.....

Part II - Number and Qualifications of Staff:.....

.....

.....

Part III - Planning for Early Learning:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6 Did you have difficulties in answering any of the questions? If so, please state which and why?

Part I - Information Related to the Institution:.....

.....

.....

Part II - Number and Qualifications of Staff:.....

.....

.....

.....

Part III - Planning for Early Learning:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7 Did you object to answering any of the questions? If so, which ones?

Part I - Information Related to the Institution:.....

.....

.....

Part II - Number and Qualifications of Staff:.....

.....

.....

Part III - Planning for Early Learning:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8 In your opinion, has any major topic or question been omitted? If so, please state which and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

9 Do you have any further comments on the questionnaire?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for completing this evaluation form.

Please return the questionnaire to:

Dr Nora Y L Yue
Early Childhood Education Research Centre
Faculty of Education
Goldsmiths' College
University of London
New Cross
London SE14 6NW

Appendix C

Summary of Feedback from Evaluation Questionnaire

Summary of Feedback from Evaluation Questionnaires

Respondents

- 1 from Infant School
- 1 from First School
- 3 from Primary Schools
- 1 from Local Authority Day Nursery
- 1 from Independent Nursery School
- 3 from Playgroups

1 How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire?

Playgroup 1	: *15 minutes*
Playgroup 2	: *15 minutes*
Local Authority Day Nursery	: *15-20 minutes*
Playgroup 3	: *30 minutes*
Primary School 2	: *40 minutes*
Primary School 1	: *45 minutes*
Independent Nursery School	: *1 hour*
Infant School	: *1 hour*
First School	: *2 hours*
Primary School	: quite a while

2 Were the instructions on the questionnaire clear and easy to follow?

Yes [9]1 No [1]2

3 What do you think of the appearance and general layout of the questionnaire?

Good	Fairly good	About average	Fairly poor	Poor	Very poor
[3]1	[5]2	[2]3	[0]4	[0]5	[0]6

5 Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous? If so, please state which and why?

Part I - Information Related to the Institution:

Primary School 1:
1-5 o.k. no.6 - asking for gender split difficult when registers are not split this way.

Infant School:
"Financial Status" seems a puzzling phrase - perhaps "establishment status".

Primary School 3:
Would like a clear definition of "Early Childhood"

Part II - Number and Qualifications of Staff:

Primary School 1:
no.7 - unsure
no.8 - did you want whole school numbers or just staff teaching under-8s?
no.9 - was this just early years teachers?

Primary School 2:
Yes, 7 & 9 - not clear whether respondent should include him/herself in answer 9.

Primary School 3:
Staff in whole institution or just 3-8 year olds?

Local Authority Day Nursery:
A bit unclear on qualification of staff - was it the person filling it up or staff group in general.

Part III - Planning for Early Learning:

Primary School 1:
no.14 - Did you want one list from each early years teacher or just me? - Attached find a cross section from a few teachers.

6 Did you have difficulties in answering any of the questions? If so, please state which and why?

Part I - Information Related to the Institution:

First School:
Clear and straight forward.

Primary School 1:
Asking for numbers in National Curriculum year groups would have been easier than ages.

Primary School 3:
It would have been much easier to give numbers of children by school year than by age, and comes to almost the same thing.

Playgroup 2:
It would be useful to have a date. We have children 2 sessions and 4 sessions but cannot divide them.

Part II - Number and Qualifications of Staff:

First School:
Did not particularly like this format - appeared complex and felt confused at times. Timing (holidays) made it difficult to have access to accurate information.

Primary School 1:
No.7 - who were you asking - 1 teacher, all teachers?

Infant School:
I needed time to go through original data to collate the information.

Playgroup 2:
Our structure does not fit. We have play leaders and assistants but no overall head. One staff member had 2 qualifications.

Part III - Planning for Early Learning:

First School:
No problems here - engaged interest and found the format a 'relief' after completing previous section!

Infant School:
Sometimes one answer would imply another - it was difficult to exclude some responses!

Primary School 2:
Almost impossible to choose five factors.

Independent Nursery School:
Question 13 did not fit their setting.

Playgroup 2:
Question 14 not applicable - surely it is not the head teacher's professional development which matters but that of staff in contact with children.

7 Did you object to answering any of the questions? If so, which ones?

Primary School 1:
None - only time factor a problem with so many other priorities.

Part I - Information Related to the Institution:

No comments made.

Part II - Number and Qualifications of Staff:

No comments made.

Part III - Planning for Early Learning:

No comments made.

8 In your opinion, has any major topic or question been omitted? If so, please state which and why?

Primary School 2:
More detail on provision both in terms of learning and resources, also groupings of children.

Independent Nursery School:
How long children generally stay in setting, e.g. 2.5 to 5 years or leaving earlier.

Playgroup 2:
(i) It might be useful to ask about the structure of a child's day - some are much more structured than others and this affects the curriculum they receive.
(ii) Does the curriculum offered vary with age?

9 Do you have any further comments on the questionnaire?

First School:
Perhaps you could consider re-designing Part 2 in order to minimise potential errors from respondents. A complicated looking format is off-putting, as in Part 2, whereas Parts 1 and 3 (simplicity of design) invite participation and engage interest.

Infant School:
(1) The timing of this exercise was difficult - term time would have been easier.
(2) I think it would be helpful if the print was a little larger in the lists - difficult to tell which number goes with which item.

Primary School 1:
I'm sorry I don't seem to have done justice to your research work, but beginning of new school year was not a good time to receive this form - staff queried relevance/reason for giving information and I'm afraid it kept being demoted to the bottom of my priority list/pile.

Local Authority Day Nursery:
ESL - the ages for girls and boys - found 'unclear' to fill in.

Playgroup 2:
I am not sure if I was the right person to fill this in, but there wasn't time to pass it on. Playgroups have a more varied structure than schools. We have separate morning and afternoon groups sharing equipment but not staff. The curriculum varies slightly, partly because afternoon children often go elsewhere in the morning. Why divide on grounds on sex.

Appendix D

Justification of the Methodology Used in the Determination of the Sample Size for the Survey

Justification of the Methodology Used in Determining the Required Sample Size for the Survey

It is evident that an increase in sample size will lead to an increase in the precision of the sample mean as an estimator of the population mean. However, the sampling costs will also increase and there is likely to be some limit on what we can afford. Too large a sample will imply a waste of resources; whereas too small a sample is likely to produce an estimator of inadequate precision. Ideally we should state the precision we require, or the maximum cost which we can expend, and choose the sample size accordingly.

Such an aim involves a complex array of considerations:

- what is the cost structure for sampling in a given situation?
- how do we assess the precision we require of our estimators?
- how do we balance needs in relation to *different* population characteristics which may be of interest?
- how do we deal with a lack of knowledge about the parameters (e.g. the population variance) which may affect the precision of estimators?

It is the last consideration that we are most concerned about in our particular study. In this survey, the main population characteristic in which we are interested is:

- the nature and qualifications of practitioners working with children under-8

There has been no previous research which seeks to identify this characteristic in the population of practitioners working with children under-8 in England & Wales. There is no record, therefore, of the population variance which could be used to estimate the required sample size for our survey.

In addition to this, there is a range of different institutional settings in which the practitioners are working with children under-8, and there has been no previous measurement of variability on the nature of the qualifications of practitioners within each of these settings. We needed, therefore, to find alternative ways of estimating the required sample size which would represent both the whole population and a valid sample from each of the types of provision. And we needed to do this without prior knowledge of any measurement of variability within this population.

There are basically four ways in which we might have set about the task of estimating the minimum sample size required when the population variance S^2 is unknown:

1. *From pilot studies*

If the pilot study itself takes the form of a simple random sample, its results may give some indication of the value of S^2 for use in the choice of the sample size of the main survey.

The selection of participants in our pilot study does not take the form of a simple random sample since it was made through contacts. Therefore, if the pilot sample is not obtained by a probability sampling procedure, we must be circumspect in such an application of the results. In addition, the pilot study is often restricted to some limited part of the population, and so the estimate of S^2 which it yields for the population characteristic can be quite biased.

2. *From previous surveys*

It is not uncommon to find that other surveys have been conducted elsewhere which have studied similar characteristics in similar populations. Often the measure of variability from earlier surveys can be used to estimate S^2 for the present population, in order to choose the required sample size to validate any prescription of precision in the current work. However, the characteristics we have chosen to study in this survey have not been explored elsewhere previously. Hence, we have no previous measurements of variability from which we could estimate the sample size required for our survey. Furthermore, taking measurements from previous studies may also introduce error, and precautions must be taken in extrapolating measurements from one situation to another.

3. *From a preliminary sample*

This is the most reliable approach. However, it was not feasible on administration and cost considerations for our project. This approach operates as follows. A preliminary simple random sample of size n_1 is taken and used to estimate S^2 by means of the sample variance s_1^2. We aim to ensure that n_1 is inadequate to achieve the required precision, and then to augment the sample with a further simple random sample of size $(n-n_1)$, where $(n-n_1)$ is chosen by using s_1^2 as the necessary preliminary estimate of S^2. The total sample size needs to be

$$(1+2/n_1)s_1^2/V \qquad \text{(where } V = \text{variance of the sample mean)}$$

an essential increase by the factor $(1+2/n_1)$ over what would be needed if S^2 were known.

This approach, if feasible, is undoubtedly the most objective and reliable. This sampling procedure is known as *double (or two-phase) sampling*.

4. *From practical considerations of the structure of the population*

Occasionally we will have some knowledge of the structure of the population which throws light on the value of S^2. In these cases, there is reason to believe that the Y-values (the measurements of characteristics from each sample of the population) might vary roughly in the manner of a Poisson distribution, so it is plausible to assume that S^2 is of the same order of magnitude as the population mean. Any information we have about the possible value of the population mean (eg from other similar studies) can then be used to estimate S^2 and assist in the choice of the required sample size. Furthermore, if we can assume that S^2 = population mean, then we can obtain an approximate $100(1- \alpha)\%$ symmetric two-sided confidence interval for the population mean directly, without the need for an estimate of variability.

In our survey, we were interested in estimating a proportion of the population having a certain characteristic. In this case, the sampling variance of the simple random sample estimator is simply related to the population proportion. The procedure used in determining our sample size for estimating the true population proportion is explained in detail below:

The task of determining the size of the sample needed requires prior specification of the desired level of confidence and the acceptable margin of error between the values of $\bar{X}$ (the sample mean) and μ (the population mean). The margin of error, or error of estimate is often called the error tolerance to reflect the imprecision a decision maker is willing to tolerate. The margin of error E is specified as the absolute value of the difference between the point estimate $\hat{p}$ and the true population proportion p; it is written as

$$|\hat{p} - p| = E$$

The expression for determining the sample size requires the value of E, the value of $Z_{\alpha/2}$ (determined from the level of confidence specified), and an initial estimate of p, denoted by p^*:

$$n = (Z_{\alpha/2}/E)^2 p^*(1-p^*)$$

Prior to sampling, available information about p based on past experience or theoretical considerations may be used as a base for the specified value for p^*. If, prior to sampling, there is no reasonable basis for specifying p^* (which is the case in this survey since there has been no previous study), then p^* is set to 0.5. In the latter case, we use $p^* = 0.5$ because it can be shown that the product $p^*(1 - p^*)$ reaches a maximum value of 0.25 when $p^* = 0.5$. When $p^*(1 - p^*)$ is set at 0.25, the above equation maximises the value for n, the needed sample size, thereby assuring that the margin of error will be within the specified range with at least the specified level of confidence, no matter what the actual value of p. If the numerical value for n found from the above equation is not an integer, the result is rounded up to guarantee that the confidence level will be at least $1 - \alpha$. Table A shows the maximum sample size required for estimating p for various confidence levels.

Table A: **Sample Size (no. of institutions) Required for Estimating the True Population Proportion**

	Confidence Level			
	99%	98%	95%	90%
Margin of Error				
2%	4148	3382	2401	1692
5%	664	542	385	271
6%	461	376	267	188
7%	339	276	196	138
8%	260	212	150	106
10%	166	136	97	68

The sample size for the questionnaire survey was determined according to the sample population for each type of under-8 provision and the funding available. The latter was crucial in determining the survey sample size.

It was decided that for each type of under-8 provision, in order to claim, with at least 90% confidence, that the observed value of the sample proportion is within 7% of the true proportion of each type of provision, a random sample of 138 institutions/groups was needed for each type of provision (see Table A - 90% confidence level, 7% margin of error).

Since in all questionnaire surveys it is almost impossible to obtain 100% response, it is necessary to adjust and compensate the sample size required for the survey. It was anticipated that in this survey we would expect a response from at least half of our targeted institutions/groups. Therefore, the sample size chosen for each type of provisions was 2 x 138 = 276. Provisions with sample population less than 276 were surveyed in full.

The methodology used in selecting the survey sample is known as two-stage cluster sampling with unequal cluster sizes (a simple random sample of education authorities, and a simple random sample of under-8 provisions under each of the selected authorities).

Appendix E

Survey Questionnaire

[For ECERP Office only:

Date received: ..... Ref no:.....]

GOLDSMITHS' COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education Research Project

PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE: Improving the Quality of Children's Early Learning

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In most countries in the world, the importance of early learning is increasingly being recognised and attempts are being made to improve the quality of provision for children from birth to eight years of age. It is in this context that the Early Childhood Education Project at Goldsmiths' College has been established. This questionnaire is designed both to gather information about current provision for children at this important stage in their education and to glean the opinions of you and your colleagues in relation to potential areas for development. Its main purpose is to create a base of understandings from which improvements might be planned. Your cooperation in completing the questionnaire is thus very important, and by doing so you will be contributing directly to that process of development.

We appreciate your cooperation. We would also point out that data gathered in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially and presented only in summary form without the name or the affiliation of the respondent.

Name of respondent: .....

Status: .....

Name and address of educational institution or group:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone number: .....

Age range of children catered for: .....

Part I: Information Related to the Institution

1 Of what type is your institution/group? (Please tick as appropriate)

Nursery school	[ ]1	Nursery class	[ ]7
Infant school	[ ]2	Workplace nursery	[ ]8
First school	[ ]3	Independent preparatory school	[ ]9
Primary or JMI (Junior mixed and infants)	[ ]4	Independent nursery school	[ ]10
Local authority day nursery	[ ]5	Playgroup	[ ]11
Private day nursery	[ ]6	Special needs school/unit	[ ]12

Others, please specify: .....

2 Status of your institution/group: (Please tick as appropriate)

Independent	[ ]1	Grant Maintained	[ ]4
Local Authority	[ ]2	Funded by Employer	[ ]5
Voluntary	[ ]3	Others, please specify:.....	

3 Does your institution share accommodation with other institution(s)/group(s)?

Yes [ ]1 No [ ]2

If Yes, please specify: .....

4 Please give a brief description of the surrounding environment? (Please tick as appropriate)

Inner city	[ ]1	Traditional rural area	[ ]4
Urban area	[ ]2	Commuter rural area	[ ]5
Suburban area	[ ]3	Mixed area	[ ]6

Others [ ]7 Please specify: .....

5 Do the children have access to outdoor play space at your institution/group?

Yes [ ]1 No [ ]2

If Yes, what is the style of access? (Please tick as appropriate)

Continuous	[ ]1
Occasional	[ ]2
Infrequent (eg requires an expedition with adults, supervised playtime etc.)	[ ]3

6 Number of full-time and part-time children on roll in each age group: (Please state the number of children in each age group)

Age:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	For ECERP office only: Total
Full-time	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Part-time	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

7 Gender of children in each age group: (Please state the number of boys and girls in each age group)

Age:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	For ECERP office only: Total
Boys	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Girls	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

8 Number of children with English as a second language (ESL) in each age group: (Please state the number of ESL children in each age group)

Age:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	For ECERP office only: Total
Children whose first language is not English (ESL)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Part II: Number & Qualifications of Staff

9 What is/are your own qualification(s)? (Please tick as appropriate)

BA(Ed)/BEd/B.Add	[ ]1	BTech	[ ]8	PPA Diploma in Playgroup Practice	[ ]14
BA	[ ]2	MA/MEd/M.Add	[ ]9		
BSc	[ ]3	Cert.Ed.(2 years)	[ ]10	PPA Tutor & Fieldwork Course	[ ]15
NNEB, City & Guilds or equivalent	[ ]4	Cert.Ed.(3 years)	[ ]11	PPA Further Course	[ ]16
		Montessori Certificate	[ ]12	MPhil/PhD	[ ]17
SRN	[ ]5	PPA Short Courses	[ ]13	None	[ ]18
PGCE	[ ]6	e.g. Learning Through Play, First Aid etc.		Others, please specify:	[ ]19
NVQS	[ ]7			.....	

10 Please indicate the number of full-time and part-time staff, both paid and voluntary, who work closely with children under-8 (including yourself if appropriate).

Full-time paid	[ ]1	Part-time paid	[ ]3
Full-time voluntary	[ ]2	Part-time voluntary	[ ]4

11 What are the qualifications of the staff (other than yourself) who work closely with children under-8? (Please state numbers for each gender in each category)

	Teachers (1)	Support teachers (2)	Nursery nurses (3)	Nursery workers (4)	Classroom assistants (5)	Others (6)
Q1 BA(Ed)/BEd/B.Add						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q2 BA						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q3 BSc						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q4 NNEB, City & Guilds or equivalent						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q5 SRN						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q6 PGCE						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q7 NVQs						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q8 MA/MEd/M.Add						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q9 MPhil/PhD						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q10 BTech						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q11 Cert.Ed. (2 years)						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q12 Cert.Ed. (3 years)						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q13 Montessori Certificate						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f

	Teachers (1)	Support teachers (2)	Nursery nurses (3)	Nursery workers (4)	Classroom assistants (5)	Others (6)
Q14 PPA Diploma in Playgroup Practice						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q15 PPA Tutor & Fieldwork Course						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q16 PPA Short Courses e.g. Learning Through Play, First Aid etc.						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q17 PPA Further Course						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q18 None						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f
Q19 Others, Please specify:						
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f

12 Where individual members of staff are counted more than once in question 11, please indicate their gender, role and their combination of qualifications.

Examples: female teacher - BA(Ed), MA
male nursery nurse - NNEB, SRN

(Please use additional sheets if necessary)

13 Have any of your staff re-trained for work with children under-8? (Please state numbers for each gender in each category)

	Early Years Age Range			
	0-3 (1)	0-5 (2)	5-8 (3)	3-8 (4)
S1 BA(Ed)/BEd/B.Add				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S2 BA				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S3 BSc				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S4 NNEB, City & Guilds or other equivalent				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S5 SRN				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S6 PGCE				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S7 NVQs				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S8 BTech				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S9 Cert.Ed.				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S10 Montessori Certificate				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S11 PPA Diploma in Playgroup Practice				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S12 PPA Tutor & Fieldwork Course				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S13 PPA Short Courses e.g. Learning Through Play, First Aid etc.				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S14 PPA Further Course				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f
S15 Others, please specify:				
.....				
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f

14 If you have Qualified Teachers on your staff, which age range were they trained for initially? (Please state numbers for each gender in each category)

	Age Range							
	3-5 (1)	3-8 (2)	5-7 (3)	3-11 (4)	5-11 (5)	7-11 (6)	11-16 (7)	Others (8)
Qualified Teacher Status:								
R1 BA(Ed)/BEd/B.Add								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f	[ ]7f	[ ]8f
R2 PGCE								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f	[ ]7f	[ ]8f
R3 Cert.Ed								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f	[ ]7f	[ ]8f
R4 Others, please specify:								
.....								
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m	[ ]5m	[ ]6m	[ ]7m	[ ]8m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f	[ ]5f	[ ]6f	[ ]7f	[ ]8f

15 Have any of your qualified teachers engaged in further study related to early childhood education? (Please state numbers for each gender in each category)

	In-service BEd (1)	Professional Diploma (2)	MA/MEd/ M.Add (3)	MPhil/PhD (4)
Male	[ ]1m	[ ]2m	[ ]3m	[ ]4m
Female	[ ]1f	[ ]2f	[ ]3f	[ ]4f

Others, please specify:

..... [ ]male [ ]female

..... [ ]male [ ]female

..... [ ]male [ ]female

Part III: The Quality of Early Learning

Please note that in this section we are asking for your general views on the quality of early learning, regardless of your own institution/group.

16 The following list identifies some of the factors that support the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children. Please tick the FIVE that you consider to be the MOST significant factors.

Qualifications of staff	[ ]1
Range of experience of staff	[ ]2
Length of experience of staff	[ ]3
Qualities of staff	[ ]4
Provision for staff development and INSET	[ ]5
Evaluating provision	[ ]6
Keeping records of children's learning	[ ]7
Assessment of children	[ ]8
Effective partnership with parents	[ ]9
High ratio of staff to children	[ ]10
Provision of an effective environment for learning	[ ]11
An adequate physical environment for learning	[ ]12
A supportive social environment	[ ]13
High quality resources for early learning	[ ]14
Adequate number of resources for early learning	[ ]15
Management structure of the institution/group	[ ]16

Others, please specify:

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

17 The following list identifies some of the factors that constrain the development of an appropriate curriculum for young children. Please tick the FIVE that you consider to be the MOST constraining factors.

Staff not trained for early years specialism	[ ]1
Inexperienced staff	[ ]2
Inadequate levels of staffing	[ ]3
Lack of opportunities for staff training and INSET	[ ]4
Poor monitoring of provision	[ ]5
Inappropriate procedures for assessing children	[ ]6
Inadequate provision for parental involvement	[ ]7
Restricted space for learning	[ ]8
Inappropriate accommodation	[ ]9
Limited opportunities for learning out of doors	[ ]10
Insufficient budget for resources	[ ]11
Poor management of the institution	[ ]12

Others, please specify:

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

..... [ ]

18 What factors do you think are influential in the professional development of practitioners working with children under-8? (Please place a "1" against the most influential factor and a "2" against the next most influential factor and so on. For two or more factors which you think are of equal importance, please place the same number against each factor)

Knowledge of child development	[ ]1
Meticulous planning	[ ]2
Organisational skills	[ ]3
Knowledge of school subjects	[ ]4
Ability to assess individual children	[ ]5
Feedback from staff appraisal	[ ]6
Regular staff meetings	[ ]7
Partnership with parents	[ ]8
Openness to change	[ ]9
Understanding of educational issues	[ ]10
Familiarity with recent research	[ ]11
Access to professional journals	[ ]12
School based in-service training	[ ]13
Local Authority based in-service training	[ ]14
Higher Education based in-service training	[ ]15

19 How would you describe a quality curriculum for young children?
(Please use additional sheets if necessary)

20 What improvements would you like to see in the current educational provision for under-8s and in the professional training and development for practitioners who work with young children? (Please use additional sheets if necessary)

Improvements on current educational provision for under-8s:

Improvements on professional training and development for practitioners who work with young children:

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.

Would you be available for further discussions/interviews? Yes [ ]1 No [ ]2

Please return the questionnaire to:

Dr Nora Y L Yue
Early Childhood Education Research Centre
Faculty of Education
Goldsmiths' College
University of London
New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Appendix F

Standard Guidelines for Structured Interviews

GOLDSMITHS' COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education Research Project

"Principles into Practice"

Improving the Quality of Children's Early Learning

INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION : We wish to reassure you the starred (*) questions which require detailed answers can be answered more fully on our separate document which can be filled in at your leisure.

INTERVIEW FOR HEAD OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR GROUP, AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS

1 Name of Interviewer and Name of Interviewee, Time, Date, Place.

2 Name and Address of Educational Institution or Group

3 What is the Financial Status of Your Institution: Independent, Voluntary, Local Authority, Funded by Employer, etc.?

***4 The children Under-8 on Roll**

A What are your numbers, including any part-time, approximately?

B What are the ages of the under-8s catered for?

C How many other languages are spoken by the children in your institution?

D What are your policies and approaches to children with Special Needs? [If interviewee requests definition of SN] In your institution how do you identify children with Special Needs, apart from those formally designated so for you?

E Do most of the children travel for more or less than 30 minutes from home?

If appropriate:

F How are the children organised, are they in groups based on age or any other form of grouping? What size are the groups?

G What kind of work are parents involved in?

***5 Staffing**

A What is the staff/child ratio?

B What are the different roles of staff, i.e. teacher, nursery worker, cook, etc.?

C What are the qualifications of staff, e.g. courses and qualifications such as BEd., PGCE, QTS, GCSE, City and Guilds, Nursing Diplomas, NVQs, etc.?

D How do staff work, i.e. in teams, singly, etc.?

6 The Premises

A Who owns or provides the premises [e.g. employer, education authority, council, church, hospital, etc.]?

B Who maintains the premises?

C Brief description of surroundings [i.e. city centre, industrial estate, suburbs]

D Number and size of rooms available.

E How do you use the rooms, e.g. classroom, parent's room, cloakroom, playroom, staff room, extended day provision, etc.?

F Outdoor playspace, resources and fixed equipment [e.g. playground, field, garden].

7 Aims of the Educational Institution or Group

Either

A(i) Do you have a printed statement for parents about what you intend the curriculum to be?

Or

A(ii) What are the main features of your prospectus and how were they decided upon?

B Do you have a printed statement or statements about what the curriculum should be for the use of staff?

If appropriate:

C If employer-funded, do you have a statement of your aims for your employer?

D How are decisions taken about the weekly and daily activities provided?

E Are there any sources of ideas and information that you find helpful in your work with under-8s?

F During the last year has any member of staff participated in further training, In-Service Education, or other professional development and support?

G What do you think is the value of these activities?

8 Records and Assessment

A What records do you keep on individual children?

B What formal assessment do you use with your under-8s?

C Do you keep any other kind of written records?

D How do you record the daily activities provided for individuals and/or groups of children?

9 Parents

A To what extent do you have contact with the parents?

B Do you ever meet parents to discuss their children's progress?

C Do you have any policies on relations with parents or projects involving them?

10 How Would You Describe a Quality Curriculum for Young Children? [A written response would be welcomed.]

Thank you for your help!

Geva Blenkin, Vicky Hurst and Marian Whitehead
Early Childhood Education Research Project: "Principles into Practice"